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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused August 2-4 news coverage on the Olympic Games in Beijing; on President Ma Ying-jeou's call for "workable diplomacy" in Taiwan's foreign relations; on U.S. arms sales to Taiwan; and on the domestic oil price adjustment policy. Several papers also reported on U.S. President George W. Bush's interview with international media representatives last Wednesday, in which he said he was very pleased with the current situation in cross-strait relations. The August 4 edition of centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" ran a banner headline on page six, quoting outgoing Taiwan representative to the U.S. Joseph Wu as saying "The United States Should Rank Top ion [Taiwan's] Diplomatic Strategy."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" discussed U.S. President Bush's latest remarks on the current state of cross-strait relations and said it believes "that Bush will most likely advise [Chinese President] Hu to be more generous in his dealings with Taipei." An op-ed piece by Richard Halloran, a U.S. writer based in Hawaii, in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" discussed Beijing's move to "politicize the Olympics." The article said Bush's plan to attend the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games "will be part of that highly charged political event as the first U.S. president ever to go abroad to the Olympics." A separate "Taipei Times" editorial, on the other hand, discussed a recent article written by Jeffrey Bader and Richard Bush of the Brookings Institute on the future U.S.-China relations if Democratic Senator Barack Obama were elected as the next U.S. president. The editorial concluded by saying that "Bader and Richard Bush's article may be the first signal that Taiwanese democrats will have no choice but to support Republican Senator John McCain's presidential candidacy before he has even made a move on China policy." End summary.

A) "Bush Pleased with Us Again"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (8/3):

"... During a meeting at the White House with Asian media reporters held on the eve of his last official trip to Asia, President Bush brought up the issue of Taiwan and his views about the current state of cross-strait relations. ... In his remarks published yesterday, Bush revealed for the first time that the U.S. administration indeed had 'some red lines' that it would not permit Taipei to cross, namely that 'there would be no unilateral declaration of independence' by Taiwan. This marked the first time that a sitting U.S. president has ever publicly stated what observers have known for many years, namely that the U.S. would not permit our government to stir up regional tensions by seeking de jure independence.

"In the past, U.S. leaders have couched their warnings in more vague terms, such as warning that Washington was against any change in the status quo of the Taiwan Strait by either Beijing or Taipei. Now we can see that the U.S. viewed Taipei, not Beijing, as the troublemaker in cross-strait relations during the Chen Shui-bian

era. But at the same time, we can see that Washington is now satisfied with our current government's policy. So it appears that our government is finally out of the doghouse in Washington. ...

"The reports have said that Bush will 'inform' [Chinese President] Hu about the arms sales, rather than make it an issue for further discussion or negotiation. Based on President Bush's remarks to reporters in the White House, we believe these reports are probably true. Indeed, given the sensitive nature of any arms sales to Taiwan, the best time for the U.S. government to make such sales come at the tail end of an outgoing president's administration. ... We believe that Bush will most likely advise Hu to be more generous in his dealings with Taipei, since it is clear that in his view, we are no longer deliberately stirring up trouble in the region."

#### B) "Beijing Politicizing the Olympics"

Richard Halloran, a U.S. writer based in Hawaii, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (8/3):

"To most people outside of Taiwan and China, a dispute over the name of Taiwan's Olympic team might seem petty. However, the argument has underscored an elemental point: The Games that open on Friday in Beijing may be the most politicized since Nazi German dictator Adolf Hitler sought to enlist the Berlin Olympics of 1936 as evidence of Aryan racial superiority. Moreover, US President George W. Bush, who plans to attend the opening ceremony, will be part of that highly charged political event as the first US president ever to go abroad to the Olympics. His decision has been mildly controversial: On one hand, it gives the president an opportunity to engage Chinese leaders; on the other, it may be seen as reinforcing the oppressive rule of China's communist regime. ..."

#### C) "One Strike against Obama's Aides"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (8/2):

"It may seem premature to assess the benefits for Taiwan that the US presidential candidates may offer after gaining office. Yet there are hints of things to come from the Democrats based on the written word. An article by Jeffrey Bader and Richard Bush of the Brookings Institution released this week suggests that if Democratic Senator Barack Obama were president, then Taiwanese who value democracy have reason to be even more nervous than they are now. ... Bader and Richard Bush's article may be the first signal that Taiwanese democrats will have no choice but to support Republican Senator John McCain's presidential candidacy before he has even made a move on China policy. The authors are reportedly awaiting senior positions in an Obama administration, which lends weight to these fears. In Richard Bush's case, the article is particularly disappointing: As a former American Institute in Taiwan chairman, he was well placed to understand that the situation in China is far more complex than the article's banal allusions to the Chinese psyche might admit. ...

"The suggestion that Washington's dealings with China 'should be offered in the spirit of trying to help them help themselves, not in order to judge them as morally deficient' is even harder to sustain given that the Chinese government is morally deficient. Such a government - with its litany of abuses of the weakest members of its society and its morally vacuous conduct in the international sphere, most recently seen in protecting Zimbabwe from UN sanctions and even in its humiliation of the International Olympic Committee - cannot be trusted to 'help itself' when it already considers itself beyond Washington's reproach, or anyone's reproach, for that matter. ... If this kind of rationalization of Chinese misrule, aggression and disingenuousness fairly reflects an Obama administration's take on US-China relations, there will be no 'change we can believe in' as far as Taiwanese are concerned. Instead, there will only be cause for despair as the pro-China network settles in for yet another term, comfortable in the knowledge that Obama will have neither the incentive nor the intellectual support to help Taiwan recover the ground that it is losing."